

UNITED NATIONS  
GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY



Distr.  
GENERAL

A/AC.35/SR.76  
10 September 1953  
ENGLISH  
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION FROM NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES

Fourth Session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE SEVENTY-SIXTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Friday, 21 August 1953, at 2 p.m.

CONTENTS

Educational conditions in Non-Self-Governing Territories:  
reports submitted by the Secretary-General and the specialized  
agencies (continued):

- (a) General developments considered in the light of the views  
expressed in the 1950 Special Report on Education

PRESENT:

<u>Chairman:</u>	Mr. LOOMES	Australia
<u>Rapporteur:</u>	Mrs. MENON	India
<u>Members:</u>	Mr. FRAZAO	Brazil
	Mr. LIU	China
	Miss MAÑAS	Cuba
	Mr. BRUN	Denmark
	Mr. TRUJILLO	Ecuador
	Mr. BENITES-VINJEZA	
	Mr. PIGNON	France
	Mr. CHARTON	
	Miss RUSAD	Indonesia
	Mr. KADRY	Iraq
	Mr. GRADER	Netherlands
	Mr. SCOTT	New Zealand
	Mr. HAMDANI	Pakistan
	Mr. WARD	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
	Mr. SEARS	United States of America
	Mr. BEDELL	
	Mr. ROBBINS	

Representatives of specialized agencies:

	Mr. GAVIN	International Labour Organisation (ILO)
	Mr. AKRAWI	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
	Mrs. MEACHER	World Health Organization (WHO)
<u>Secretariat:</u>	Mr. HOO	Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the Department of Trusteeship and Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories
	Mr. BENSON	Secretary of the Committee

EDUCATIONAL CONDITIONS IN NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES: REPORTS SUBMITTED  
BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AND THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES (continued)

Mr. BRUN (Denmark) stated that, for information concerning the situation in Greenland, the members of the Committee could refer to the document prepared by the Secretariat from the report of the Danish Government. Denmark's aim was to raise the level of education in Greenland to match its own educational system. The desire for compulsory education, expressed in the Committee, was a principle under review in Denmark; voluntary education was believed more appropriate as all Greenland parents wished their children to be educated. Sole use of the vernacular in a population numbering 23,000 was a restrictive influence. The Greenlandic people had asked that Danish be taught more effectively as a second language. Denmark was bringing knowledge of the United Nations to the attention of the people of Greenland through Mr. Sveistrup's book, available in Greenlandic, which covered the work of the international organization.

Mr. AKRAWI (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) read a list of documents and publications which had been circulated to the members of the Committee. Those documents were the interim report on the problem of vernacular languages in education (A/AC.35/L.137) and two other publications, "The use of vernacular languages in education" and "African Languages and English in Education". He also referred to the annual report on measures for suppressing illiteracy which could be applied in Non-Self-Governing Territories (A/AC.35/L.136), a monograph on the "Progress of Literacy in Various Countries", the report in two parts on a "Preliminary Survey on Methods of Teaching, Reading and Writing", document A/AC.35/L.143 on free and compulsory education and the report of the regional conference on free and compulsory education in South Asia and the Pacific, held at Bombay in 1952, the preliminary statistical report on public expenditures relating to education, and the document on basic facts and figures. He also referred to an exhibition of school textbooks organized by UNESCO, which showed the methods used in various countries.

He stressed the wide scope of educational problems. It was essential to be acquainted with the conditions in the Territory where education was to be developed and to take into account the social upheavals which such development would necessarily entail. The objectives of the Administering Powers should be

to promote the development of the territories without upsetting their internal equilibrium and while protecting existing cultures, to raise the standard of living of the populations by promoting the development of economy, to improve health conditions and to develop democratic feeling and a civic sense among the inhabitants. It was essential to deal with problems which arose not only in the field of education, but in all other fields as well. The implementation of educational development programmes was a condition of economic progress, since it guaranteed not only that the results achieved would endure, but that progress would be continuous. Success could not be assured, however, unless that education applied to all the inhabitants, adults, parents, children, men, women, and rural and urban communities.

In connexion with development plans, he referred to some attempts that had been made in the preceding century and between the two wars; among post-war efforts, he referred to the basic educational campaigns undertaken by UNESCO, the establishment of pilot projects and associated projects, the establishment of training centres for basic education, the training of experts, the collection and dissemination of information, the study of the problem of vernacular languages etc. Much remained to be done and the most effective methods must be chosen. It was UNESCO's task to make known the results achieved in that field. He then referred to the question of methods to ensure basic education at the appropriate level for the region or territory concerned, and quoted some examples, relating in particular to Mexico, China and Indonesia.

There were no grounds to expect that the objective of free and compulsory education would be achieved within a period ranging between five years and one generation, according to the degree of illiteracy of the territories concerned.

With regard to the problem of financing development programmes, he stated that the cost of the construction of school buildings might be reduced by the holding of open air classes; moreover, teachers in certain countries made the necessary teaching equipment for themselves. The programmes should not be modelled on the European ones, in spite of the wish of the inhabitants of the territories to hold diplomas which were recognized abroad and to obtain employment in the administration. The teachers trained should be able to teach a number of subjects and to adapt themselves to the economic needs of the territory in which they taught.

In conclusion, he recalled that the development of education should be an integral part of general development. Education should be intended for adults

as well as for young persons, and international co-operation should guarantee the continuity of the progress achieved.

The CHAIRMAN thanked the UNESCO representative for his statement and expressed his satisfaction with the co-operation between the United Nations and UNESCO, which should prove most valuable.

(a) General developments considered in the light of the views expressed in the 1950 Special Report on Education (Agenda item 4 a)

Mr. BENSON (Secretariat) stated that the Secretariat's proposal for the study of the question was based on the recommendation in General Assembly resolution 645 (VII). He referred to the relevant documents and recalled the difficulties with which the Secretariat had sometimes been confronted in preparing its reports and memoranda. He invited delegations to submit any corrections which they deemed necessary to the text of those documents.

Mr. WARD (United Kingdom) emphasized two of the principles on which his Government based its educational policy. They were the dual system of education and the need to respect and develop the traditional culture of the inhabitants wherever that was advantageous.

The first principle was manifested throughout the United Kingdom and the Territories which it governed by the co-existence of State-administered education and private education, which was in the hands of religious and other voluntary organizations. He stressed the importance of the work carried out by voluntary agencies of all kinds in all the Non-Self-Governing Territories. The Government of the United Kingdom considered such dualism to be advantageous, since the education provided by missions filled certain gaps existing in purely secular education. Moreover, the two types of education formed a uniform system. Subsidies were given to private education only to the extent to which the norms established by educational authorities were observed. The programmes and rules governing educational institutions were the same for both forms of education. Private education was subject to supervision by official inspection services. That system seemed to satisfy the populations of the Non-Self-Governing

Territories; the Cambridge Conference, which had been attended by many African delegates from African territories, had recognized the advantages of that collaboration between the State, churches and other voluntary organizations.

With regard to the second principle governing British educational policy, he referred to the statement contained in the publication entitled "Education for Citizenship in Africa", the text of which was given on page 36 of the document A/AC.35/L.131. It was there stated that if education was to be effective, it must be based partly at least on local cultural foundations. That had long been the policy of the United Kingdom Government. Education in the Non-Self-Governing Territories should have two objectives, that of giving pupils the knowledge they would need to take their place in the modern world, and that of helping to preserve indigenous culture.

He then reviewed the progress achieved in the territories under United Kingdom administration. The efforts made in the colony of Kenya, for example, were already already producing good results; he quoted figures showing the progress achieved in African education since 1946. Measures taken recently would not bear fruit until later, when the school building and staff training programmes were completed. From the financial point of view, the credits allocated for education had been increased from less than £250,000 in 1946 to over £1,000,000 in 1952. Progress had also been achieved with regard to equality of treatment, since the principal colleges in Kenya were now open to representatives of all races. Higher education had been developed and the number of students sent to the metropolitan State or abroad to complete their studies had increased.

With regard to the participation of the inhabitants in educational policies, he gave figures from several territories to show the great extent of it in British territories. He showed the great numbers of indigenous inhabitants who occupied responsible administrative positions or served as members of central and local education boards.

In conclusion, he stated, in reply to a question by the Chinese representative about the choice of textbooks, that the principle applied in the United Kingdom was that of selection by the teacher. That principle was extended to the territories

administered by the United Kingdom so far as secondary education was concerned and was being gradually applied in primary education. Where many primary school teachers were ill-equipped to make their own selection, education authorities had advisory committees on textbooks to assist them.

The meeting was suspended at 4.20 p.m. and resumed at 4.30 p.m.

Mr. ROBBINS (United States of America) congratulated the Secretariat and the specialized agencies on the documents that they had made available to the Committee. The Department of the Interior and the Department of Education had studied them carefully and had found them to be excellent.

In accordance with resolutions 645 (VII) and 647 (VII), the United States Government had transmitted to the Territories under its administration the special report on social conditions and other reports of the Committee.

He introduced the expert from his delegation who would describe the conditions in the Non-Self-Governing Territories administered by the United States.

Mr. BEDELL (United States of America) stated that in the Territories administered by the United States it was important for the indigenous inhabitants to participate in the direction of educational policy.

Attention was given to the wishes of the people. The peoples wanted above all to improve their standard of living. Education therefore must be adapted to that end. Thus to improve health conditions it was important to extend the teaching of hygiene, itself a necessary complement to the work of the doctors and experts. Furthermore, if the people were to progress, they should learn the fundamental skills of reading and writing. In the statistical investigations into illiteracy, the inquirers asked two questions: What is the highest grade of school completed? Was it completed satisfactorily? The number of years spent at a school gave a fairly accurate idea of the level of education attained; a person was considered literate when he had spent five years at a school. It was important to remember that criterion in consulting United States statistics.

Among the other objectives of the educational policy of the United States were: the development of occupational fitness, preparation for domestic life, citizenship and the adequate use of leisure time.

He then described the situation in various territories dependent upon the United States. In Alaska, there were two types of education, the one financed by federal funds and the other by local. One of the main problems was the remoteness of schools. To help overcome it, the United States Government and the Territory of Alaska supported a certain number of boarders free of charge in villages. There was no discrimination as to race or sex. Alaska had a university and in addition all United States universities were open to inhabitants of the Territory. Alaska attached particular importance to the training of teachers.

In the Samoan Islands the same principles were in force. Schooling was compulsory for children from seven to fourteen years. The number of people able to read and write in English or some other language was 95 per cent. There was no inequality of treatment. There were no higher educational institutions but an attempt was made to rectify that omission by sending pupils to the United States.

The situation in the Hawaiian Islands was almost the same as in Guam, especially since 1950. The situation in Puerto Rico had much improved since the census of 1939-1940. An educational programme for adults was now being carried out. The number of people able to read and write in English or Spanish was nearly 80 per cent. The situation in the Virgin Islands was also very satisfactory; for higher education, students were sent to the Polytechnic Institute in Puerto Rico.

On the whole the United States Government endeavoured to encourage the local financing of education with the Federal Government providing only small amounts for a few new educational activities. A certain number of problems still remained to be solved, notably that of school buildings. The United States Government would be happy to take part in an exchange of views in the Committee on that point and also on the preparation of teaching material at the local level. Such an exchange would be most helpful.

The CHAIRMAN, speaking as representative of Australia, drew attention to paragraph 8 of the document concerning the participation of inhabitants in educational policies and programmes (A/AC.35/L.127). In June 1952, the Legislative Council had adopted Ordinance No. 121 on education, which provided for the setting up of an Advisory Council composed of four members representing the



missions and four members representing the Administration, and also of district educational committees. The Ordinance had not yet come into force.

Mr. ROBBINS (United States of America) said that it would be convenient for his delegation if the Committee were to examine item 10 of its agenda after completing item 4.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN drew the Committee's attention to the possible value of an educational sub-committee. During the past three years the Committee, after holding technical discussions, had appointed a sub-committee to draft a special report for its consideration. That procedure might well be adopted again. The sub-committee would not be a drafting committee; its terms of reference ought to be as wide as possible, to give it a free hand to draft its own report as it thought fit. It should be given some idea of how to approach its task and of how far to go into the details of questions dealt with in the 1950 report. Some differences of opinion had been voiced by members of the Committee. Some had held that the Committee should not again discuss the general principles adopted in 1950. The representative of Iraq, on the other hand, had thought that it would be useful to restate them. Other members, particularly the Indonesian representative, had stressed the necessity of recalling their fundamental character and the importance of putting them into practice. The United Kingdom representative, however, had said that the Committee's observations should be limited to three questions of particular importance. The Pakistan representative, though prepared to accept that suggestion, had doubted whether the Committee could usefully make any general proposals on the financing of education. His own opinion was that there should be no divergence of view concerning the general task of the sub-committee.

The earlier sub-committee had consisted of six members, three representing the Administering and three the non-administering Powers; the rapporteur was a member ex officio. Members might perhaps, if necessary, permit the Chairman to make suggestions in the light of the experience of previous years.

Mr. MATHIASON (United Kingdom) said that he intended at a subsequent meeting to make some proposals for the work of the sub-committee.

14/9 p.m.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.